

## Back to the Past by JBear

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**Summary:**

It's the summer of 1985 and El has but one request of Hopper; let her go see Back to the Future with her friends. He can't let her go. It's not safe. But maybe Joyce could convince him otherwise?

## Back to the Past

### Author's Note:

Thanks to everyone who commented and left kudos on my last fic. I hope you like this one as well!

“Please”

“El,” Hopper sighed, exasperated and pinching the bridge of his nose between his thumb and index finger. They’d been having this exact conversation for a good week now and his patience, as well as his ability to maintain his firm stance on the issue while she kept looking at him *like that* was really wearing him thin.

“*Please*” she pleaded again, her best pout on full display. “Nobody will see me. We won’t even be outside!” she added and he raised a skeptical eyebrow at her.

“Technically” she added sheepishly with a shrug.

“The car is still outside” he reminded her. “I’m sorry Kid, it’s just not a good idea. It’s not worth the risk, OK?”

She had nodded in understanding and retired to her room after that but the saddened and resigned look on her face had nearly made him cave right then and there. She barely asked for anything she knew he wouldn’t give willingly and he hated disappointing her.

Still, they’d made it this far and she only had 2 months to go before she’d be out in the world and enrolling in school for September anyway. He had already pushed his luck setting the “one year” timeline ahead by a couple of months as it was.

Watching her walk away, shoulders slumped and socked feet shuffling across the floor, Jim made the decision to grab for his hat and get the hell out the door before he changed his mind that he’d already made up several times. He needed to get to the station, anyway, and he did not want to be in ear-shot when she made the phone call to her friends giving them the bad news that she wouldn’t

be coming with them tonight.

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After following up on a few calls, Hopper returned to the station again later that afternoon hoping to get a head start on his paperwork so he could finish up at a decent hour and at least be home to spend the evening with the kid whose heart he'd just broken. He'd have to make it up to her somehow.

"Hey Flo," Jim said in way of greeting as he walked past his receptionist, making a beeline for the coffee pot.

"Hop, Joyce Byers is waiting for you in your office" she told him, her tone implying an apology as she knew full well the Chief had intended on an early day today and rarely was that ever the case when Joyce Byers needed his assistance in anything involving the Hawkins Police Department.

"OK" Hopper sighed. He had a feeling he knew what this was about. If it were anything else or anything urgent, she likely would have called instead of heading down here.

He had a feeling she was hoping he'd have more trouble saying no to her in person.

Filling up his coffee cup half way he turned and headed around the corner to his office, closing the door behind him as he entered.

"Joyce," he greeted, albeit a little gruffly as he palmed his hat, taking it off his head and hanging on the coat rack behind the door.

"Hey Hop" she smiled at him sweetly and fuck if that wasn't the last thing he needed.

"Everything OK?" He asked, making his way around to the front of his desk while Joyce occupied the guest chair on the other side.

"Oh, sorry, yeah everything is good" she explained hurriedly with a flippant wave of her hand, wanting to ensure he knew her presence here was no cause for alarm bells. "I just... wanted to talk to you about something?" she said hesitantly and he sighed.

*Here we go.*

“Should I start packing a bag?” He said and her face contorted slightly in confusion.

“Bag? For what?”

“For this guilt trip you’re about to send me on”

“Hopper” she huffed at him, rolling her eyes. *Always such a smart ass.*

“Joyce, come on, you don’t think I get enough of this at home from the kid? You think it’s not hard enough to say no to her now I gotta come in here and say it to you too?” His tone came out a lot sharper and louder than he had intended and he instantly regretted it when he saw her flinch slightly.

“I’m sorry” he sighed, voice much softer now.

“I just thought...” Joyce began, full argument she had rehearsed in the car on her way over here at the ready, but then suddenly stopped herself. She settled her shoulders and then brought her gaze up to find his and she frowned slightly before reaching across the desk to place her hand over his.

“No, I’m sorry Hop. You’re right, it’s not my place. Whatever you think is best. I’m honestly the last person who should be trying to tell any parent they’re being over protective”

The last confession made him chuckle slightly and she smiled at him again as she gave his hand a slight squeeze before taking it away to rest back in her lap.

“What if...” she began thinking out loud. “How about Will and I come over instead, have our own movie night at your place”

“No, Joyce” Hopper instantly held his hand up in front of him. “It’s bad enough I gotta ruin my kid’s night, I’m not about to ruin another one’s”

“Come on Hop, you know Will, he’s probably gonna spend the whole night feeling bad that El’s not there anyway” she said with a shrug.

"No, no" he shook his head. "Look, I appreciate it, I really do, but you guys should go. Have a good time. El... she'll get over it. I'll make it up to her somehow"

"You're sure?" Joyce asked, eyes searching his but he refused to hold her gaze. Despite her attempt at trying not to, he still felt guilty as all hell.

"Yeah, yeah I'm sure. Thanks Joyce"

"OK" Joyce nodded. She stood up from her chair and offered him one last smile. "Say hi to El for me"

"I will" he promised as he watched her walk out the door before letting his head fall into his hands.

...

Three hours later Hopper had finally made his way back to the cabin, bounding up the steps two at a time in a rush. He had meant to be home an hour ago but as usual, the day got the better of him.

"El" he called out as he pounded the secret knock on the door and after a second or two he heard the locks slide open and he pushed his way inside.

"What are you doing?" He asked and El just stared at him in confusion. Why was he practically out of breath like he just ran here?

"It's already six-thirty and you're in pyjamas. We gotta go" he explained and her brow furrowed further.

"Go... where?" She wondered.

"Back..." he started and she tilted her head to the side.

*Back where?* she thought, confused.

"...to the future?" he finished, a sly grin forming on his lips and El instantly broke out into a wide smile before catapulting herself up and into his arms, her hands wrapping around his neck.

“We’re going?!” she yelled excitedly and she felt his head nod against her.

“Well not if you don’t go get dressed, hurry up!” he said and she jumped down, scampering off to her room excitedly and he smiled as he watched her run off before he took to his own bedroom to change his clothes.

They pulled into the local Drive-In with just a few minutes to spare but were met at the ticket window with a frowning employee.

“Hey Chief, Sorry but uh... all sold out. It’s a big night tonight you know” he said in way of explanation and though he couldn’t see her, hiding under a blanket in the back of the truck, Hopper could just imagine El’s face falling at his words.

“Uh, yeah, no, that’s why I’m here” Hopper began, thinking on his feet. “I figured everyone in town is probably here tonight, opening night and all, wouldn’t hurt to have someone on patrol and I drew the short straw. Go figure” he shrugged.

“Oh, well, that’s great Chief!” The employee said, delighted. “Go right on in. There aren’t any actual spots left but we always keep the side lanes clear for cars coming in late or leaving early. Just find a spot along there”

“All right, have a good night” Hopper said, tipping his hat slightly before heading past the gate and into the darkened grass lot.

“Not bad, huh?” Hopper said, chuckling slightly to himself.

“You’re lucky” he heard El grumble as she threw the blanket off herself but when he caught her reflection in the rearview mirror he could see her grinning.

“Yeah, yeah. Sit back until we stop the car please” he instructed and she hopped onto the bench seat, buckling herself in.

Hopper found a spot near the back of the lot and off to the side, sighing when he realized they likely wouldn’t get close enough to a speaker post, his fears being confirmed as the movie came to life on the large screen several yards ahead of them but they could only hear

very muffled distant sounds.

*Well this wasn't going to work.*

“Ok” he sighed, looking into the back seat at El. “Put this on,” he began, tossing a red baseball cap back at her. “And keep your head down, OK?”

“Yes” she immediately agreed, throwing the hat on and tucking her curls into it best she could. She pulled her hoodie over her head as well in an added effort to hide her face.

They hopped out of the truck a moment later and Hopper lead her into the lot, his hand resting on the back of her neck as he steered her through the cars while she kept her gaze firmly to the ground beneath her feet.

Looking around Hopper finally spotted the car he was looking for and made his way over to it, pulling out his flashlight as they sidled up next to the car. He tapped the end of his flashlight against the drivers side window, causing Joyce to nearly shriek in response as she gasped loudly, clutching at her chest for a moment before finally rolling down her window.

“Jesus Christ Hopper, you scared the hell out of me!” she hissed at him.

“Excuse me, Ma’am” Hopper put on his best official police officer voice as a joke. “Found this kid wandering the lot, they belong to you?” He asked, moving aside slightly and pushing El up to the window.

The car full of teens cried out in delight before Joyce quickly whipped her head around to the back seat immediately shushing them as their mouths snapped shut in almost comical unison.

“Yes, my apologies, *Officer*” she said, playing along, a twinkle in her eye. “That crazy Joyce Byers, never knows where her kids are off to” she added and both he and El chuckled.

Joyce pushed open her car door and stepped outside before ushering El into the driver’s seat in her place. The car was already packed

tighter than a sardine can with kids and she's sure Hopper would be grateful that she took her seat rather than one in the only other alternative; Mike Wheeler's willing lap.

Once El climbed inside Hopper closed the door and leaned against the still open window.

"No drinking and driving now, you hear me?" he joked and El rolled her eyes in response.

*"Dad"*

"Oh right, sorry, no Dad jokes in front of your friends" he smirked at her. "For the record," he began, eyes peering throughout the car at the rest of the kids, "she thinks I'm hilarious"

"Dad!"

"Ok, ok, I'm going" he sighed, laughing a little to himself. "But hey, listen, no getting out of the car, no matter what, OK? You take this," he began, handing her an extra walkie. "You need to go to the bathroom or anything you radio me first and I'll come get you. Understood?"

"Understood" she nodded.

"Here," he took his wallet out of his back pocket and took a crumpled \$10 bill out, tossing it into the crowded back seat at no one in particular. "Get yourselves some popcorn or candy or whatever but she stays here" he reiterated, pointing a finger at El. "And Will stays with her. At all times. Got it?"

"Yes, I got it" Will nodded in understanding from his place in the passenger's seat. From the back, Mike, Dustin, Lucas and Max all nodded their heads in agreement.

"Oh, and no playing Musical Chairs or nothin' either. I like this seating arrangement just fine as it is. Except... maybe you two" Hopper paused, looking in the back at Max who was half on the seat and half on Lucas' lap as she was squished between him and Dustin and there were four of them sharing a backseat that was barely big enough for two.



“Hands where I can see ‘em kid” he said gruffly and Lucas immediately shot his hands up in the air like he was about to be put under arrest, ignoring Dustin’s snickering laughter next to them. “And what do you need a blanket for? It’s July” he huffed and Lucas quickly gathered the blanket, balling it up and tossing it towards the front seat like it was on fire.

“Ok, can you go now?” El grumbled under her breath so only Hopper could hear her.

“Ok” Hopper sighed. He hated the feeling of anxiety he got by leaving her unattended, despite the fact that she was surrounded by her friends and he’d only be a couple dozen yards away. Still, he’d have to get used to it eventually he figured.

“Enjoy the movie, kid” he said to El and she smiled at him.

“Thanks”

“Come on, my truck’s just over here” he said to Joyce, leading her away from the car and she followed after him.

“What made you change your mind?” Joyce asked, wrapping her arms around herself and brushing her hands up and down her arms as they trekked across the grassy gravel path. Despite the fact it was July, it was night time and it was cooler than she’d thought it would be and she had regretted only wearing a t-shirt.

“Eh,” Hopper sighed with defeat. “Kid’s got a puppy dog face that just won’t quit”

“Jim Hopper, you old softie” Joyce giggled, nudging his side with her elbow.

“I know, don’t tell anybody all right?” He smirked at her as they reached the truck and climbed inside.

“Sorry, you can’t really hear the movie from here... Didn’t realize it would be sold out so fast” Jim apologised as they settled into their seats.

“Well the kids dragged me out of the house near two hours ago to

make sure we got here in plenty of time” Joyce said, shaking her head slightly. “It’s all they’ve been talking about for weeks. Anyway, I’m sure I’ll hear all about it over the next couple weeks too so, I’m ok with not hearing it now”

They chatted a bit about different things; their jobs, their kids, the sparse bit of town gossip that was even remotely considered interesting, but after an hour or so Jim decided he should probably at least *pretend* that he was pretending to work so he decided to do a walk of the perimeter. It also gave him an excuse to check on El and the other kids and make sure they were following the rules and behaving themselves. He didn’t make a spectacle of looking in on them, just quickly flashing the light into the car as he wandered past, as he did with all the cars.

Seeing nothing out of the ordinary he returned to the Blazer about twenty minutes or so later, climbing inside and taking off his hat, resting it on the dash.

“All good out there” he summed up as he settled himself back into a comfortable position.

They sat in silence for a few moments before Hopper reached inside his shirt pocket, fishing out a pack of Marlboro’s and taking one stick out of the pack and bringing it to his lips before lighting up. He took a long drag from the cigarette before passing it across the bench seat to Joyce who took it without hesitation.

She coughed upon inhaling, like she almost always did from his cigarettes, still not quite used to the harshness of them.

“Now this,” Hopper began, raising an eyebrow at her. “Is definitely familiar, huh?”

Joyce’s cough turned into a sputtering laugh at Hopper’s suggestive comment as she passed the cigarette back over to him.

“You and me at the drive-in?” she asked and he nodded.

“We weren’t really watching the movie back then either, were we?” he said and she shoved at his arm playfully.

“Behave yourself!” she admonished, but her tone was light as she met his playful gaze across the darkened interior of the car.

“Car was definitely less spacious then too,” he added, lifting his right arm over the back of the bench seat and shuffling over towards the middle slightly.

“God, the leg cramps I would get” Joyce remembered, shaking her head slightly at the memory.

“Yeah, I could only wish it was me making you scream like that” Hopper threw in and Joyce quickly turned to him, swatting his arm.

“James Hopper!”

“What?!” he asked with a laugh.

“What is with you tonight?” She asked, but she couldn’t keep the grin from spreading across her lips. God he was impossible.

“Just feelin’ a little nostalgic is all” he answered as he shuffled a little closer still. Joyce turned her gaze forward to the movie that she couldn’t hear and folded her arms across her chest, doing her best but failing miserably at keeping a straight look on her face.

“C’mon Horowitz” Hopper teased next to her ear as he pushed her hair back slightly so he could nuzzle in close to her neck.

“Hang on a second,” Joyce began, pushing herself slightly away from him, leaning into the door of the truck as much as she could to turn and face him. “Did you come here tonight for El, or for me? Well, for *you*” she added as an afterthought.

Jim stared at her blankly for second too long and realized he was busted.

“What, can’t it be both?” He asked in defense and she shook her head, rolling her eyes at him playfully.

“Sure, but you’re getting less ‘Dad’ points for this” she scoffed at him, but he knew she was far from angry.

“OK, but how many boyfriend points did I earn instead?” he asked, wiggling his eyebrows at her.

“*Secret* boyfriend” she corrected.

“Well, like I said, just like old times then” Hopper shrugged and Joyce let out a laugh. “Except this time instead of your parents we’re hiding from our own kids. Well, and the entire town, for that matter I guess” he added.

“Not for much longer, OK?” She said softly, her tone turning more serious as she looked into his eyes and took his large hand in hers.

“I know” he offered a small smile in response. “I kinda like having us all to ourselves anyway” he smirked.

“Hmm” she hummed in agreement, nodding her head. “You were right about one thing though,” she continued, her hand leaving his to rest instead on his thigh. “This car is a lot roomier”

“Yeah?” he asked, his voice low as he looked down to her hand on his leg. He used his free hand to take one last drag of the cigarette before butting it out in the ashtray and focusing his attention back on her.

“Yeah” she smiled before tilting her head up to capture his lips with her own.

The kiss started out slow and innocent enough, but as things usually tended to be with them, the heat escalated quickly. Bringing his hands to cup her face, Jim held her impossibly closer, swallowing the tiny moans that would escape her lips as the kiss deepened and their tongues began the familiar dance they both knew so well.

Soon his hands left her face and went to her hips instead and Joyce let out a gasp as he lifted her swiftly into his lap. Straddling him, Joyce ground down against the insistent bulge in Jim’s jeans, desperate for the friction.

“Fuck” Hopper cursed, his mouth leaving hers only to find purchase on the side of her throat, then continuing down to her collarbone as he kissed, licked and nipped at every inch of skin he had access to.

Meanwhile Joyce was practically clawing at Jim's button-down, desperate to get it off him. She managed to get a few of the offending buttons undone and pushed her hands inside, raking her fingernails along his solid chest before bringing her hands up to clutch at his shoulders while his mouth continued its assault on her flesh, driving her mad with want.

Needing to feel more of her, Jim pushed his hands up under the hem of her t-shirt before pulling it fully over her head and tossing it carelessly to the back seat.

"You are so fucking beautiful" he whispered breathlessly and Joyce could feel her skin turning crimson under his heated gaze. No matter how many times they'd find themselves like this, Jim always made her feel like it was the first time he'd ever laid eyes on her. Truth be told he was the only man who had ever actually made her *feel* beautiful. And god help her, she loved him for it.

"Joyce," her name left his lips like a prayer before he ascended his mouth onto a lace covered breast and she gasped, arching her back to urge him on as she continued to grind into him.

*God she actually felt like a fucking teenager again.*

"Hopper" she moaned next to his ear before her mouth closed around it, dragging the lobe through her teeth. She both heard and felt his groan of approval as continued lavishing her chest with the attention of his skilled tongue.

"Hop" she said his name again, urging him on.

"Hopper... Hopper"

**"Hopper!"** his name rang through the overheated interior of the car like a shotgun blast and they both ceased their movements immediately, realizing it was actually one of the kids yelling through the radio at them.

"Shit" Hopper cursed, scrambling for the radio.

*Shit.*

“Yeah uh... Yeah, what is it?” Hopper managed, albeit a little breathlessly.

“Wha- the movie has been over for like five minutes, what are you guys doing?” Came the response and both adults immediately recognized it as Mike’s. They looked up to the movie screen and noticed the film’s credits nearing their end.

*Shit. Shit. Shit.*

“Uh, yeah we were... somebody... their car died. I had to give them a boost. We’ll be right there” he lied, praying to whatever God that he sounded at least marginally believable.

“Ok. Over and out” Mike stated before the crackling of the radio silenced.

“Jesus Christ” Hopper sighed, falling against the back of the seat and Joyce leaned forward, her head resting against the side of his neck as she laughed against his skin.

“Busted. Guess this really is just like old times” she teased. “Do you wanna pick this up later? I could tie the bed sheets together and leave them out my window for you”

“Somehow I doubt I’m nearly as nimble and stealthy as I was back then” he smiled at the many memories of sneaking into her bedroom window.

“Stealthy? Please. There might has well have been a drunk Clydesdale clomping around the roof” she let out a hearty laugh. “My Dad wasn’t deaf you know, just in a serious case of denial”

“You’re just as mean as were back then too” Hopper said in a mock pout, pushing at her gently. Joyce chuckled again as she reached over him into the back seat, retrieving her t-shirt and shoving it over her head as Jim worked on righting his buttons.

“Ready?” she asked, crawling off of his lap.

“Yeah let’s go” he sighed.

Finding their way back to Joyce's car was considerably easier now as nearly all the cars had cleared out. Still they decided to walk rather than drive. Or rather, Jim had decided, because he needed the extra minute or so to calm himself down and thought the fresh air might do him some good. Not to mention he couldn't see a damned thing out of the fogged up windows of his Blazer.

They reached the green Pinto and Joyce immediately went for the drivers side door, not bothering to wish him a goodnight. She knew if she even looked at him again she wouldn't be able to resist leaning in to kiss him at least once more.

*This was harder than she thought.*

"Come on Sweetie" Joyce said to El as she opened her drivers side door. "Your Dad's waiting"

"Bye El" the kids shouted in unison and she smiled brightly as she waved at them.

"Bye"

"Thank you Joyce" she added and Joyce smiled warmly at her before wrapping her arms around her in a hug.

"Goodnight Sweetheart"

Hopper placed his hand protectively at the back of El's neck as he watched Joyce climb into the car and eventually drive away. He waited until they could no longer see the taillights leading away until they turned and started making their trek back to the truck.

"Did you like the movie?" Hopper asked and El nodded.

"You guys behave yourselves?" He asked and she turned her head towards him, a mischievous grin forming at her lips.

*"Did you?"* She asked incredulously.

"What's that supposed to mean?" He asked and she only pointed at him in response. He followed the line of her finger, looking down to the middle of his chest where he realized his shirt buttons were

definitely askew. Two were buttoned into the wrong holes, one missed entirely.

*Shit.*

He stared blankly at El for few seconds, calculating his options and realizing it was useless. All the kid did all day was watch cheesy soap operas, she knew what a haphazardly button shirt meant when she saw one.

“Look, kid-” he began but she was quick to cut him off.

“Everybody already knows” she shrugged her shoulders.

“Everybody alrea- who’s everybody? You only know like eight people” Hopper grumbled.

“Yeah, and they *all* know” El added.

“Just... keep walking kid” Hopper huffed.

*Joyce was going to kill him.*

“Are you and Joyce going to get married?” El asked after a moment, her tone teasing.

“What?”

“Do you *looooooove* her?” She continued in a sing-song voice.

“Ok, you know what, I liked you a lot better when you didn’t speak in complete sentences” he huffed in annoyance as they continued their walk back to the car.

“Are we going to move into their house, or will they move into ours?” She continued her endless teasing, her grin unable to contain itself.

“That’s it, we’re playing the quiet game on the road home. Loser gets no Eggos for a week” Hopper threatened and El’s teasing ceased immediately.



She still smiled though. All the way back to the car and the entire way home.

And when he thought she wasn't looking, she caught Hopper smiling too.

**Author's Note:**

Comments and kudos give me life! Also, if you have any prompts or requests, feel free to leave them here :)